

VI. *An Account of a Person kill'd by Lightning at Worcester, communicated in a Letter to the Publisher, by R. Beard, M. D. R. S. S.*

The following Account was given to a Gentleman at the time the Affair happened ; but not knowing whether it deserv'd your Consideration, I deferr'd sending it till you were pleas'd to desire it.

Worcester, June 11, 1724.

WE had last Night continu'd Lightning in the East from Eight o' clock to Twelve ; the Weather for some time before having been very sultry, the Wind at N. E. and the Barometer at settled Fair. This Morning the Mercury sunk, and the Sky became more Cloudy and Temperate, except a few hot Gleams ; at Two in the Afternoon, several fierce Showers fell, attended with Flashes of Lightning and Claps of Thunder, that still approach'd nearer us : Between Two and Three, a Flash came so violently upon me, succeeded so very quick by a low, unusual, dreadful Sound, that I immediately went to the door, fearing some Mischief near. I was soon call'd to an Officer's Lady (aged about 18, and breeding) kill'd by it in the adjoyning Street. I found her yet warm, and that she had survived the Stroke for 6 or 7 Minutes. The Fire-Marks they shew'd me, were Streaks of a Copper-Colour, branched from the Left Shoulder all-over the *Thorax*, and interspersed here and there with irregular Spots, which gave occasion for that Conceit publish'd in our News,
that

that *curious Plants were drawn on her Bosom, as with the finest Pencil.* This sad Accident happen'd in a Parlour-Window next the Street, that could contain about two Persons: The Lady, it seems, terrified with the repeated Lightning and Thunder, (it having formerly been fatal to her Brother) desir'd an Officer to change Places with her, that she might be near her Husband; but she was no sooner seated by his side, than she inclined side-ways, and spoke some Words; after she was carried to another Room, she said, she was gone, and then, that she was blind, and ask'd for Water. The Husband was thrown along, together with the fortunate Gentleman that had just resign'd his Seat; and a large Looking-Glass was lifted off the Hooks. The Landlord's Daughter, at work near the Lady, perceiv'd such an Impulse on the side of her Head, that her Hearing was much impair'd, *and upon every Peal of Thunder since she is affected in like manner, tho' not so strongly.* The Gentlemen complain'd, that they were stupified, forced down they did not know why, unless it were for want of Breath; and of Pains and Numbness in their Limbs. They had likewise on different Parts of their Bodies such reddish Wheals as were seen on the Fair Lady's Breast: But these Symptoms vanished the next Day. The other two Persons at the further End of the Room were untouch'd; they were all sensible of a sulphurous Smell. The Pane of Glass exactly behind the Lady's Waist, was perforated by a round Hole of an Inch and half Diameter, as if done with a Diamond, or rather a Wind-Gun; but nowhere thereabouts could I discern the least Traces of Fire, or Heat, nor on the Lady's Clothes (having no Stayes on) the Signs of any Violence. On a more nice Examination of the Body, in the Presence of the Friends, that Evening, I discovered on the left Loin, taking in

part of the Spine of the *Os Ilium*, which was somewhat swollen, a deep Contusion of the same Dimension with the Breach in the Glass: The Skin was neither indurated, nor pierc'd: The Blood in the Capillaries all round, but chiefly up the Back, settled, the Colour of which was easily distinguished from that of the Streaks, and the circular Impression.

The *Phænomenon*, that caused this Misfortune, rose from the N.E. first slid off the Gabel-Beam, and the Bricks on the back part of the next House, fill'd a little Court with Flame and Smoke, then turned a Lead-en Spout contrary to its former Direction, mounted over the Roof, and, cracking a Stack of Chimneys, dropt down at the Window where the Husband and Wife sat. Some credible People that saw it, to their great Terrour, assure me, that it was a Ball of Fire, and that it burst with the loudest Report they ever heard, and then with a hissing Noise, pass'd about a Yard from the Ground through an adjacent Street, and rowl'd off to to the S.W. Some Workmen there, and on a neighbouring Hill, observed the same.

In my Opinion, the Mortality of this Blow may be accounted for from the known Effects of imprison'd Air only, when set at liberty, as the Appearances on the Skin may, from other active Particles hurried along with it at the time of the Explosion. The *Impetus* being first received on the Parts describ'd, occasioned her Death to be less sudden than usual in such Cases.

Worcester, June 4, 1726.

We have had more Lightning and Thunder the Week past, than ever has been known in that space of time: And what was more extraordinary, the Continuance of it for 9 or 10 Hours together, with little or no Intermission, and at such a height above us. So far has this been.

been from doing any great Damage near us, that in the Opinion of the Country-Farmers, it had very good Effects. especially at the beginning during the Heat : For the little Insects, that in some Places threaten'd the Destruction of the Hops and some other Plants, fell off like Bees by the Steam of a lighted Match. I know not whether this has been observ'd to you before ; but I saw such remarkable Instances of it in certain Situations, that I could not help giving you this short Account of it.

I am, &c.

R. Beard.

